

Minister for Care Gillian Keegan Daily Telegraph op-ed

We promised to tackle the challenges facing adult social care and that is precisely what we are doing.

There are no easy answers to the complex challenges of an ageing population and growing adult social care needs, a situation mirrored across the world.

Our long term vision for social care, laid out in this white paper and supported by the £5.4 billion Health and Social Care Levy, is part of a package of measures designed not just see us through the pandemic but to provide a suitable and sustainable adult social care system for the future

This is about getting the right balance between personal and public contributions with a charging system which is necessary, fair and responsible.

The transformed social care system will include a limit to the cost of care for everyone, increase state support, apply to people in both residential and at home care and mean nobody is forced to sell their homes in their lifetime.

We are reforming the system to ensure everyone has the choice, control and support to live independent lives. To ensure everyone can access outstanding and personalised care and support. And finally to ensure adult social care is fair and accessible to all who need it.

This will require physical and digital infrastructure which is why we are investing £300 million in housing to help people remain in their homes or appropriate supported housing settings with upgrades to homes, such as stairlifts or wetrooms.

On the digital side we will be spending £150 million on technology such as sensors to help monitor without disturbing the sleep of those receiving care unnecessarily and improving access to digital records so everyone has the right information at the right time to provide the best care.

We are giving a record £4.8 billion for local authority support, providing £162.5 million as part of workforce recruitment and retention fund and £388 million for infection and prevention control support but this is about more than figures on a spreadsheet.

This is about people, about the carers, the people receiving care and their families.

I had the pleasure of meeting a couple in their nineties this week, able to remain together with support from a home care provider. They spoke about how important it was for them to be able to stay together in the house they had lived in for 64 years with the support to make it happen.

Our care staff have our admiration for their tireless work and we will support them to train and gain qualifications – backed by £500 million.

Everyone will benefit from these changes and we have introduced a cap of £86,000 on care costs to help everyone plan for the future.

No one will have to sell their home in their lifetime. People are able to take out a Deferred Payment Agreement so that payments can be deducted from their estate after they die. And if someone or their spouse lives in their home, they will not be forced to sell it to pay for care.

This will end the pain of those catastrophic care costs so more people can preserve their savings and assets and pass something on to their loved ones.